

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 CU-05 AID-20 IO-14 OMB-01 DRC-01 /131 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4975

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4737

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, KS

SUBJ: NFDYS: ROKG COMMUTES DEATH SENTENCES OF KIM CHI HAS
AND FOUR OTHERS

REF SEOUL 4726

1. DEFENSE MINISTER SUH JYONG-CHUL HAS COMMUTED DEATH SENTENCES OF KOREAN POET KIM CHI HA AND FOUR STUDENTS TRIED BY COURTS-MARTIAL PANEL 2 TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT, BECAUSE OF "EVIDENT SIGHS OF REPENTENCE." ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, FOUR STUDENTS (WHO WERE SENTENCED JULY 13) INCLUDE YI CHOL AND YU IN-TAE (SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ORIGINALLY CHARGED AS OVERALL LEADERS), KIM PYONG-KON (CHARGED AS SNU LEADER FOR UNIVSITIES), AND NA PYONG-SIK (CHARGED AS SNU LEADER FOR CHRISTIAN STUDENTS.) SENTENCES OF YO CHONG-MAN (UNEMPLOYED AND CHARGED AS LEADER FOR CAMPUS ELEMENT OF PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY) AND YI HYON-PAE (PRIVATE SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR) CHARGED FOR "BEHIND THE SCENES" OPERATIONS) REMAIN UNCOMMUTED THUS FAR. THERE ALSO CONTINUES TO BE NO CHANGE IN DEATH SENTENCES GIVEN TO PANEL 1 DEFENDANTS.

2. DEPARTMENT SHOULD NOTE THAT ORIGINAL INFORMATION
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FROM PRIME MINISTER'S SECRETARY INDICATING THAT

SENTENCES OF FIVE STUDENTS HAD BEEN COMMUTED (REFTEL)
WAS NOT PRECISELY ACCURATE.

3. COMMENT: WE DO NOT BELIEVE SENTENCES WERE COMMUTED
BECAUSE OF "REPENTENCE;" POET KIM CHI HA AND OTHER
STUDENTS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE MADE DEFIANT STATEMENTS
THROUGH OUT TRIALS AND KIM CHI HA LAUGHED AT THE COURT
MARTIAL'S SENTENCING. IT SEEMS MOST LIKELY THAT THE
COMMUTATION CAME IN RESPONSE TO INCREASING INTERNATIONAL
CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY IN THE UNITED STATES.
HABIB

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